

We claim:

1. A control method comprising the steps of:
 - regulating the setting for a setting device, comprising a device for reporting the setting, in a range between two end positions by using a measured parameter, given by the device for reporting the setting depending on the setting of the setting device, and a characteristic curve,
 - assigning an actual value for the setting to each value of the measured parameter, in order to reach a set value for the setting,
 - monitoring during regulation the set value or the actual value for the setting, and
 - when the set value or the actual value for the setting lies within a given separation from a given value for an adaptation setting, adapting the characteristic curve by
 - interrupting regulation,
 - driving the setting device to the adaptation setting,
 - in the adaptation setting capturing a value of the measured parameter and using this value to define an adaptation value and
 - adapting the characteristic curve by using the adaptation value and the adaptation setting.
2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein during regulation the fulfillment of at least one further condition relating to the regulation is monitored, and the characteristic curve is only adapted when the condition is fulfilled.
3. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the change over time in the set value for the setting or the actual value for the setting is monitored, and in that adaptation of the characteristic curve is only carried out when the length of time over which the set value or actual value changes is less than a maximum value.

4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein a setting device is designed so that its setting cannot be changed beyond at least one of the end positions, and in that this end position of the setting device is used as the adaptation setting.

5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the value of the measured parameter is acquired after a given length of time following an interruption to the regulation.

6. The method according to Claim 4, wherein the point at which the adaptation setting is reached is determined by monitoring the current consumption of an electrically operated driving device which is part of the setting device.

7. The method according to Claim 4, wherein the value of the measured parameter is acquired after a given length of time following an interruption to the regulation, and wherein the point at which the adaptation setting is reached is determined by monitoring the current consumption of an electrically operated driving device which is part of the setting device.

8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the characteristic curve can be represented as a function which can be allocated parameters by one or two pairs of mutually assigned adaptation values of the measured parameter and the corresponding value for the adaptation setting.

9. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the measured parameter value captured in the adaptation setting is subjected to a plausibility check, and in that if an implausible value is detected a signal to that effect is sent to a diagnostic device.

10. The method according to Claim 9, wherein the plausibility check examines whether the measured parameter value captured in the adaptation setting lies within a given value range.
11. The method according to Claim 9, wherein if an implausible measured parameter value is detected, a given substitute value is used instead of the captured value.
12. The method according to Claim 10, wherein if an implausible measured parameter value is detected, a given substitute value is used instead of the captured value.
13. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the adaptation values from a plurality of adaptation processes are used for the purpose of error diagnostics.
14. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the value of the measured parameter in the adaptation setting is captured a plurality of times and the adaptation value of the measured parameter is formed by filtering the captured values.
15. The method according to Claim 1, wherein an integrating element of the control method is reinitialized when the regulation is resumed.
16. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the setting of an exhaust gas recirculation valve in an internal combustion engine is regulated by a method in which the setting device drives an exhaust gas recirculation valve.

17. A control device comprising :

- a setting device, comprising a device for reporting the setting, which is regulated in a range between two end positions by using a measured parameter, given by the device for reporting the setting depending on the setting of the setting device, and a characteristic curve,
- means for assigning an actual value for the setting to each value of the measured parameter, in order to reach a set value for the setting,
- means for monitoring during regulation the set value or the actual value for the setting, and
- means for adapting, which, when the set value or the actual value for the setting lies within a given separation from a given value for an adaptation setting, adapt the characteristic curve by
 - interrupting regulation,
 - driving the setting device to the adaptation setting,
 - in the adaptation setting capturing a value of the measured parameter and using this value to define an adaptation value and
 - adapting the characteristic curve by using the adaptation value and the adaptation setting.